The Quality of Life Executive Committee

Reconnecting With America To Build Quality of Life

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SECDEF 1st Annual Military Family Forum

- Involved 50 active duty and reserve military members and their spouses
- Hosted by Secretary and Mrs. Cohen to focus on military quality of life
- Senior OSD leader panels provided updates and addressed issues:
  - Financial stability, Family Readiness and Education
  - Commissary and Exchange benefits
  - Housing and Health Care

SECDEF 1st Annual Military Family Forum

- **Major issues:**
  - **TRI-Care access and payment**
  - **Housing availability and BAH computation validity**
  - **Communications between base officials and members**
- **Best practices:**
  - **Military Family Symposium process**
  - **Regional QoL management**
  - **Family Support Groups**
  - **Personal Financial Training/Assistance**

SECDEF 1st Annual Senior Enlisted Advisor Forum

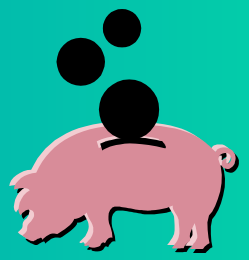
- Involved Senior Enlisted Advisors and their spouses
- Hosted by Secretary and Mrs. Cohen
  - Acknowledge the role of Senior Enlisted Members
  - Provide updates on Compensation, Recruiting and Retention, and Health Care
  - Solicit their opinions

SECDEF 1st Annual Senior Enlisted Advisor Forum

- **Issues addressed:**
  - **Pay Table inadequacy**
  - **Need to strengthen bonds with American public**
  - **High Tempo driving unacceptable Work/Life balance**
  - **TRICARE procedures need attention**
  - **Child Care availability**
  - **Availability of quality education in public schools near military bases**
  - **Member and spouse Tuition Assistance**

Junior Enlisted Financial Stability Initiative

- **Purpose: To improve the financial stability of junior enlisted personnel and families**
  - **Studies Indicate Financial Problems**
    - **56% of junior enlisted have difficulty making ends meet**
    - **Confirmed During Field Visits and Conferences**
  - **Problems Center On:**
    - **High Housing Costs**
    - **Transportation Costs (Car, insurance, maintenance)**
    - **High Cost of Credit**
    - **"Mobility" Costs**
    - **Spouse employment challenges**



Risk Factors

DEMOGRAPHICS

- Youth/Immaturity
- Independence
- Family Responsibilities
- Unemployed Spouse
- Children
+ Education

NATURE OF THE MILITARY

- Deployments
- Frequent Moves
- Separation from Extended Family
- High Cost of Living
+ Stability of Employment

Top 5 Reasons for Lack of Funds*

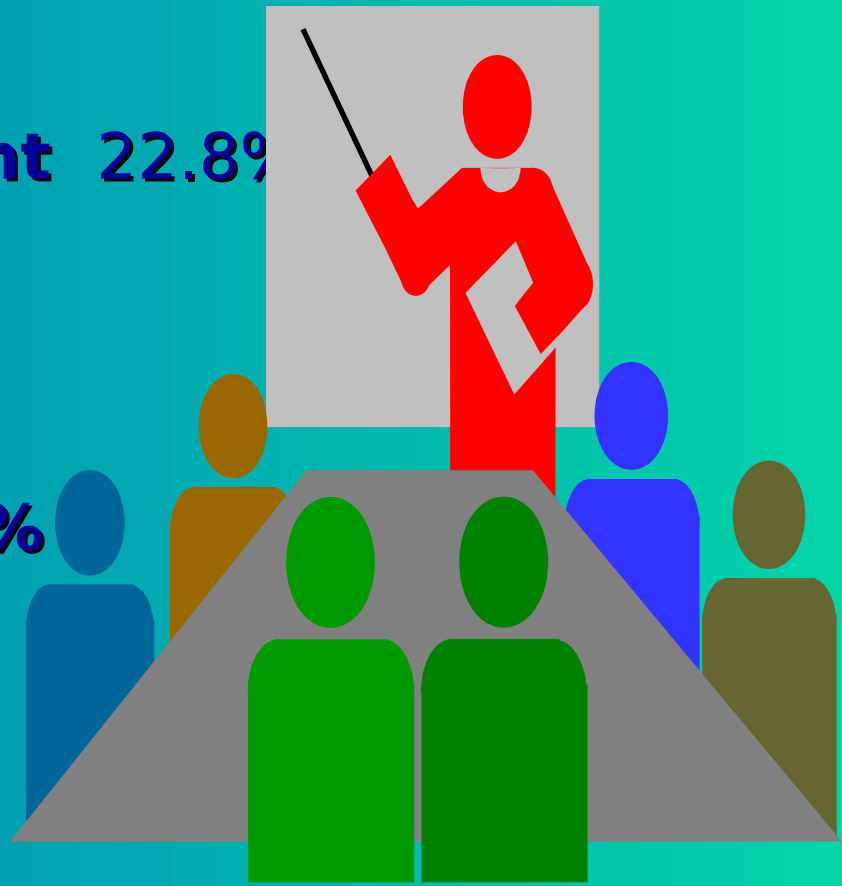
Unforeseen Emergency 45.3%

Financial Mismanagement 22.8%

Pay Problem 10%

Inadequate Income 5.5%

PCS Move 3.6%



*Navy Relief, 1999

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Jr. Enlisted Financial Stability Initiatives

FAIRNESS CAMPAIGN

- Join Forces with FTC
- Hold Consumer Protection Forums
- Develop a Media Campaign
- Explore fixes to Payday

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- Underwrite Revolving Loans-Mirror USDA Loans
- Partner with Banks/ CU
- Chamber Discount Card
- Promote Commissary Food savings
- Increase Savings/ Investments

FINANCIAL TRAINING

- Improve Integrated Financial Training
- Train Spouses
- Investment Counseling Program
- Educate on PCS Reimburse-ment

HOUSING ASSISTANCE

- Housing Cooperatives
- Reduce out-of-pocket Expenses
- Reduce Costs of Moving
- Explore Furniture Alternatives

TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE

- Arrange Reduced Cost Auto Insurance
- Develop Low Cost Auto Loan/Buying Program
- Develop Alternatives for Auto Maintenance
- Reduce Cost of Auto Leasing
- Public Trans/Parking

SPOUSE EMPLOYMENT

- Create Small Business Opportunities
- Provide Second Spouse Preference
- Develop Training with Industry
- Investigate Spouse Educational Opportuniti

National Initiative

- **National Partners for Financial Empowerment**
  - **Forum for private sector organizations and companies to partner with federal government to encourage Americans to save for their future and take control of their personal finances**
    - **Create a national campaign to raise public awareness**
    - **Create and maintain a website for financial education materials**
    - **Host research and conferences**
    - **Catalyze, publicize and participate in local level partnerships**
    - **Bring unbanked individuals into mainstream**
    - **Improve financial literacy**
  - **Partners with DoD in this initiative include**
    - **Treasury Department**
    - **Interested private organizations, state, local and federal agencies**

Building Coalitions

- Federal Trade Commission
- Department of Agriculture
- Small Business Administration
- Department of Treasury
- American Red Cross
- Community
- Military Relief Societies
- Military Exchanges
- Military Commissary
- Military Associations
- AFYMCA
- Consumer

Credit Union Initiatives

- Formed working groups with Defense Credit Unions and Credit Union National Association
- Currently planning initiative
  - Increase availability of low cost credit
    - Either credit union or government-secured loan
  - Add financial management training and built-in savings into loan program
  - Survey credit unions to determine current best practices
  - Demonstration program of new initiatives
    - Will be looking for credit union volunteers to field projects